

VZCZCXRO7944
RR RUEHDE
DE RUEHMS #0283/01 1061359
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 151359Z APR 08
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9481
INFO RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 0359

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MUSCAT 000283

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DEPT FOR NEA/ARP, OES/ENV, OES/PCI
DEPT PASS EPA, HHS
AMMAN FOR ESTH MBHALLA
DUBAI FOR ATO DWILLIAMS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [AMGT](#) [AMPR](#) [KSCA](#) [OTRA](#) [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [TBIO](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: MUSCAT 2008 REQUEST FOR SCIENCE FELLOW

REF: A. STATE 28712

[B](#). MUSCAT 207

Summary

[1](#). To build on the past success of the Embassy Science Fellows Program in Muscat, Embassy requests a Science Fellow for FY 2009 in either medical sciences (with an emphasis on diabetes) or agricultural diseases ("dabas," date palm insect). Embassy will provide the Fellow with administrative support, including housing, an office, transportation for official meetings, and other logistical assistance. End Summary.

From Diabetes to Dabas Infestations

[2](#). Embassy requests a Science Fellow for Winter 2009 to furnish expert advice to host country colleagues and officials, and to facilitate ties between the Omani ESTH community and U.S. counterparts. In particular, Embassy would appreciate a Fellow who specializes in diabetes research and awareness. Diabetes is a serious concern in the Sultanate. At the end of 2006, 54,599 diabetics were registered with the Ministry of Health, with 5,167 new cases reported that year. The Ministry officially reported that the diabetes prevalence rate had increased from 9.75% in 1991 to 11.6% in 2000, though up to 25% of Oman's population of 2.5 million could be affected by type two diabetes mellitus today. The Ministry of Health is concerned that individuals might not even be aware that they are diabetic.

[3](#). Embassy also would be interested in hosting a Fellow with experience on the "dabas" date palm insect, which is common in Oman. As reported ref B, the Ministry of Agriculture has asked for USG assistance in conducting joint research on the impact that the dabas insect has had on the cultivation of Omani date palms. These requests stem from the Ministry's continued interest in protecting Omani agriculture. In an early 2007 meeting with the Ambassador, Agriculture Minister Sheikh Salim bin Hilal al-Khalili noted that agriculture, including date palm cultivation, has always been an important component of the Omani economy. For this reason, the Ministry is very interested in strengthening its disease management efforts, especially in light of potential threats from neighboring countries. The Ministry places particular emphasis on diseases and insect infestations affecting date palms.

¶4. Embassy is currently hosting a science fellow to assist the Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs on a project entitled "Coastal Zone Development: Cumulative Impacts to Biotic Resources." Through this research, the Fellow is analyzing the impact of large-scale development projects on species and habitats, with a view toward providing recommendations on avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating potential damage. The Ministry is enthusiastic about the Fellow's presence in Oman, as are other entities responsible for environmental protection, including the Diwan of Royal Court, Environment Society of Oman, and Sultan Qaboos University. The current Fellow's visit follows the hosting of a second NSF-sponsored Science Fellow in early 2004.

Logistics: Housing, Resources, and Office Workspace

¶5. The Science Fellow would report to the Political/Economic Chief and work closely with the Public Affairs Officer and Economic/Commercial Officer, who serves as the Embassy's ESTH officer. Office space would be provided along with telephone, computer, and internet access. Embassy would provide housing, but personal transportation would have to be arranged by the Fellow. (Note: An economy car rents for approximately \$420 per month. End note.) Assistance in making appointments and other logistical arrangements would be provided, as well as interpreting and translating services on an as-needed basis. English is widely spoken in Oman, particularly in Muscat. Embassy will assist the Fellow to obtain a host country visa.

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¶6. Embassy's preferred time frame for hosting a Fellow is January 2009, for approximately two to three months. Point of contact is Economic/Commercial Officer Brian Grimm, email GrimmBM@state.gov; phone (968) 2464-3623; fax (968) 24-694-355.
GRAPPO